

Larry Schultz

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January 19, 2006 02:25 PM

Paul A. Marshall
California Department of Water Resources South Delta Branch
1416 9th Street, 2nd floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: 916-653-6077

Subject: South Delta Improvements Program DEIR/S

Dear Mr. Marshall,

I am writing to offer my comments on the draft environmental impact report/statement for the South Delta Improvements Program, particularly regarding the part of the project that would increase the maximum pumping limit for the state water project's Delta pumps to 8,500 cubic feet per second. I strongly believe that this project is unnecessary and could further damage a Bay-Delta ecosystem that has already been harmed by excessive water diversions.

I urge you to withdraw the draft environmental impact report and issue a new draft with a preferred alternative that includes a significant reduction in Delta water diversions. The analysis of this alternative should include potential environmental benefits, how water conservation and other proven water management tools can help the state meet its future water needs, and how such a reduction, combined with investments in other water supply sources, could improve the reliability of urban water supplies.

It makes no sense to move forward with a project that will divert more fresh water from the Delta when Delta fish populations are crashing. Please withdraw the SDIP DEIR/S until the causes of the Delta fish decline are identified and fully resolved.

California does not need to increase Delta diversions to meet its current and future water needs. The State's own Water Plan proves that increased investments in urban and agricultural water use efficiency and reclamation can meet our needs well into the future.

At the minimum, the SDIP DEIR/S should consider an alternative that significantly reduces Delta pumping from current levels, actually improves Delta water quality and habitat, and protects fish. I also urge you to include, in the new preferred alternative, at least as much water dedicated to ecosystem restoration and protection as is required by the state's plan to protect and restore the delta -- the CALFED Bay-Delta Plan. The Department of Water Resources should work to restore the delta protections in that plan that have been undermined during the past five years.

Finally, I urge you to issue a full draft environmental impact report on the proposal to increase the state water project's maximum pumping limit once improved scientific information is available regarding the causes of the delta's decline and once this decline has been reversed.

Please include me on your mailing list to be notified of any decisions or activities concerning this project.

Sincerely,



Larry Schultz